

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR



DR. CHRISTINA M. KISHIMOTO  
SUPERINTENDENT

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

P.O. BOX 2360  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

February 11, 2019

**Via Email: [rpeters@hanahauoli.org](mailto:rpeters@hanahauoli.org)**

Robert G. Peters, Ed.D.  
Chair, Early Learning Board  
and Board Members  
CEED Center, KCAA  
2707 South King Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96826

Dear Dr. Peters,

As a group of school leaders committed to making a difference one day at a time, we have a pulse on the needs of our communities and work alongside our teachers on the frontlines. We have seen trends in education come and go. We have been pitched on ideologies touted as the "magic fix." The one constant that we have been advocating for many years is the expansion of high-quality pre-kindergarten (PreK) programs.

Economic status continues to be a barrier for many of our families, along with geographic location. Our elementary schools have had to shoulder the burden of providing remedial support to incoming kindergarteners who were not fortunate enough to benefit from early childhood education programs.

A child's brain grows most rapidly during the first five years of life, and early brain development has a lasting impact on a child's ability to learn and succeed in school and in life. We need to accelerate the pace for expanding equitable access to more of our 4-year-olds.

Legislative bills have been introduced at the Legislature to begin addressing this issue, ranging from funding the Hawaii State Department of Education's (HIDOE) aggressive expansion plan to which entity should oversee and manage public PreK classrooms. All of this attention has led to a discussion that has played out in legislative hearings and the media, calling into question who is best equipped to serve the needs of our youngest students.

The Early Learning Board (ELB) and Executive Office of Early Learning (EOEL) have been instrumental partners in standing up PreK programs in our public schools, which is why we are troubled by their accusations that we are not capable administrators and should not retain authority over PreK classrooms on our campuses.

AN AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER



Robert G. Peters, Ed.D., et al.  
February 11, 2019  
Page 2

When it comes to PreK programs, we have the heavy lift of providing such critical services as:

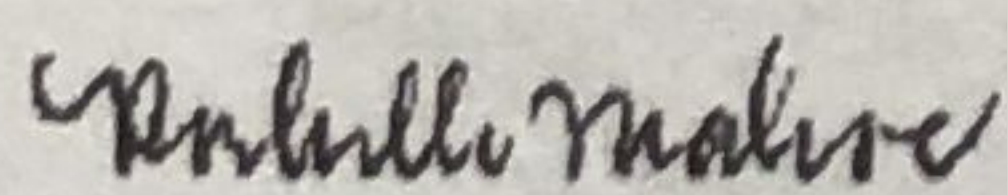
- Teacher selection, support, and evaluation;
- A cohesive school design that provides a PK-6 continuum of learning experiences;
- Professional development for teachers and staff based on Complex Area and school academic plans;
- Induction and mentoring support for all beginning teachers;
- Safety and security for all learners and employees on campuses;
- Physical space on our campuses and overseeing capital repair, maintenance and improvements;
- Meals, breakfast and lunch for all students;
- Transportation for students whose Individualized Education Program plans require it;
- Fiscal services (i.e. payroll);
- Compliance with all state and federal laws;
- Data collection and analysis of PreK special education, inclusion, EOEL-funded and grant-funded classrooms; and more.

We are educators who began our careers in the classroom. We see first-hand the tremendous benefits of an early childhood education as well as the very real demand in our communities for more public PreK. Yet we are criticized for supposedly lacking subject-matter expertise in this area.

We celebrated when the statewide plan "Our Keiki Our Future" was signed by all parties at the table, and were sorely disappointed as legislative testimony requested that our empowerment as decision makers be stripped as public school leaders of our own PreK programs.

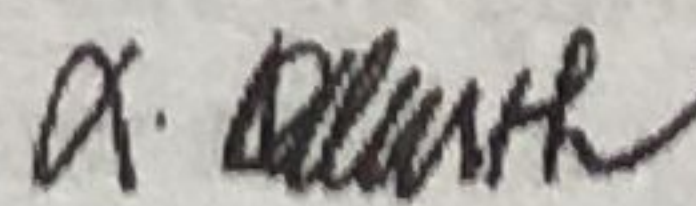
We are requesting that ELB accurately represent the position of the Department as one of the major providers of early learning.

Sincerely,

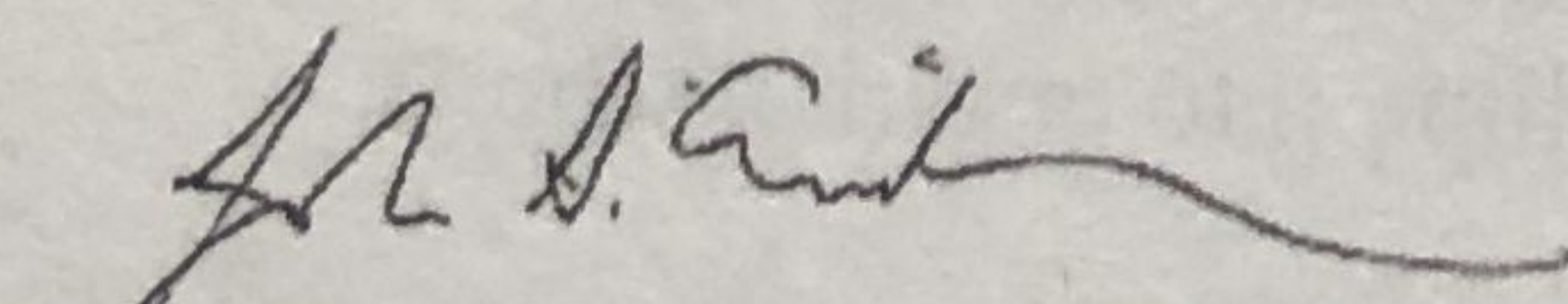


Rochelle Mahoe  
Complex Area Superintendent  
HON-Farrington-Kaiser-Kalani

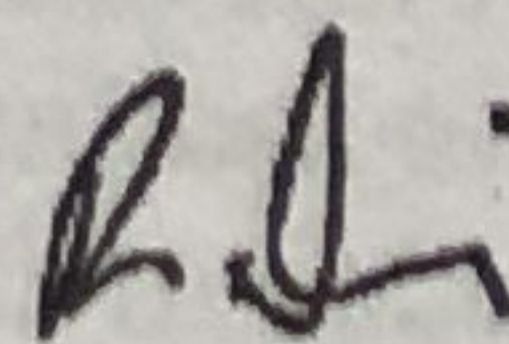
Sincerely,



Linell Dilwith  
Complex Area Superintendent  
HON-Kaimuki-McKinley-Roosevelt

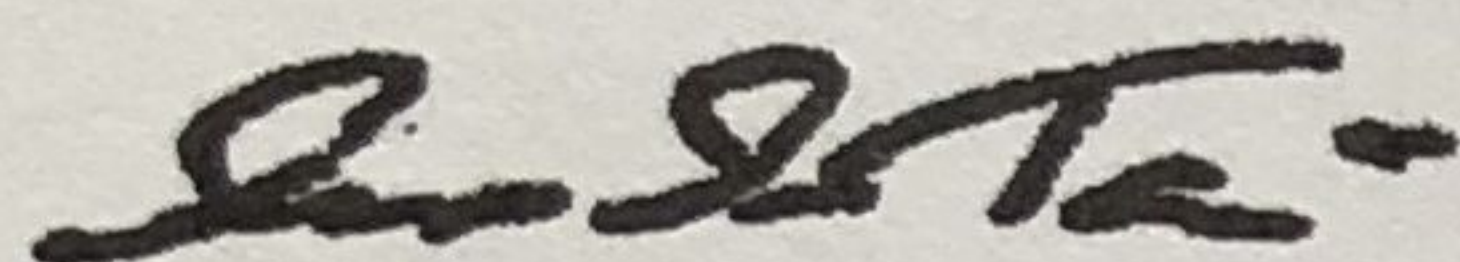


John A. Erickson  
Complex Area Superintendent  
CEN-Aiea-Moanalua-Radford

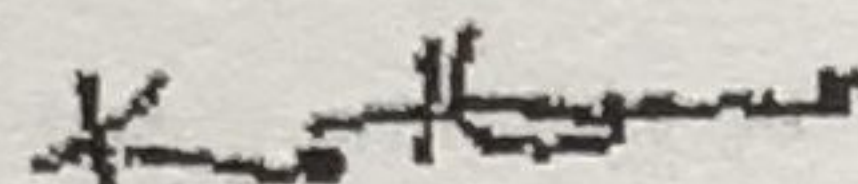


Robert Davis  
Complex Area Superintendent  
CEN- Leilehua-Mililani-Waialua

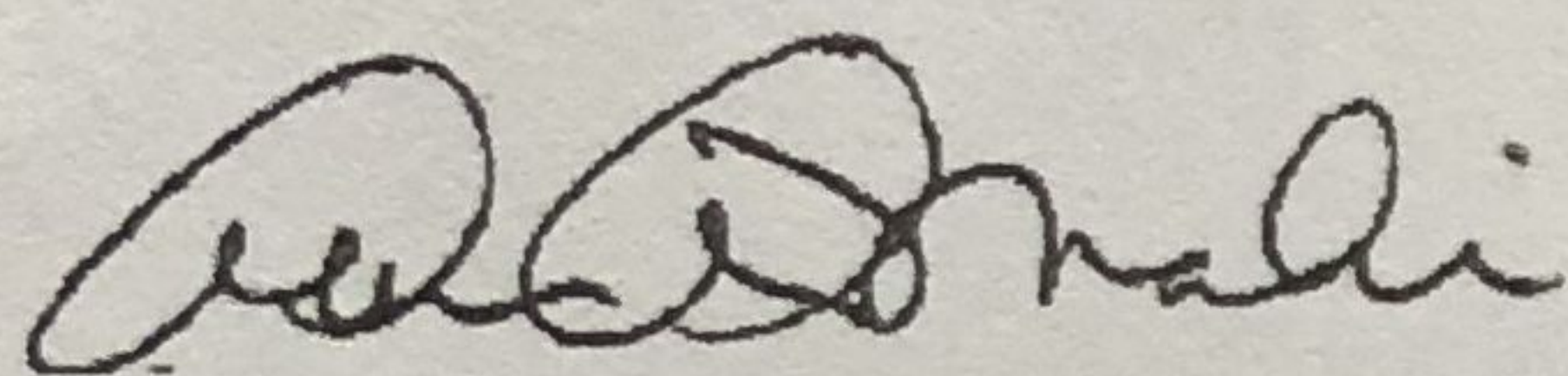




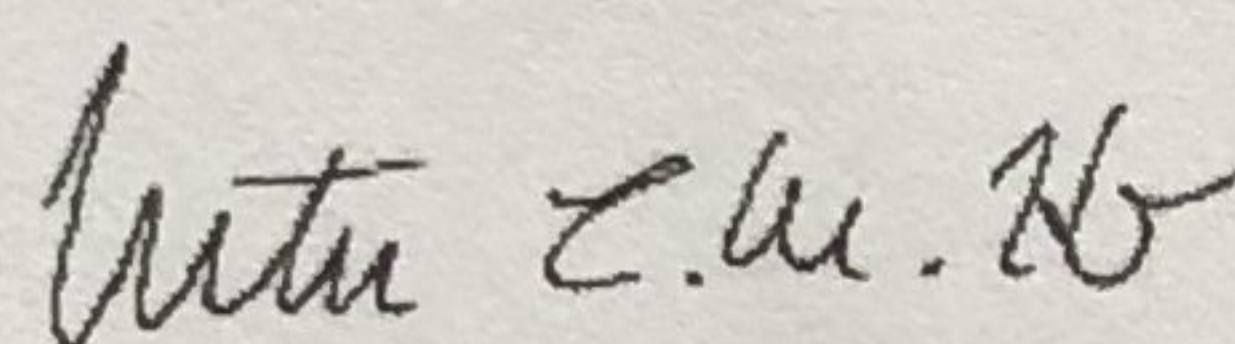
Sean S. Tajima  
Complex Area Superintendent  
LEE-Campbell-Kapolei



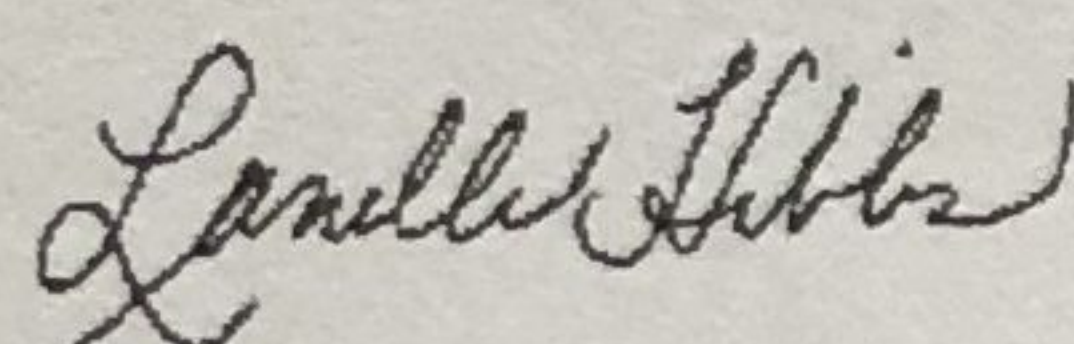
Keith Hui  
Complex Area Superintendent  
LEE-Pearl City-Waipahu



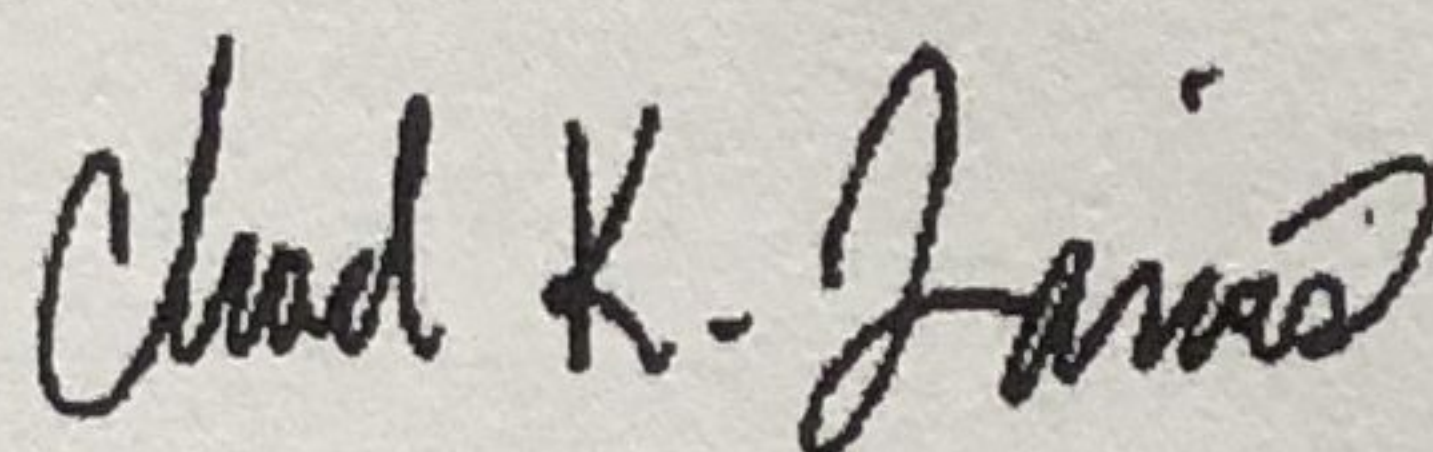
Ann A. Mahi  
Complex Area Superintendent  
LEE-Nanakuli-Waianae



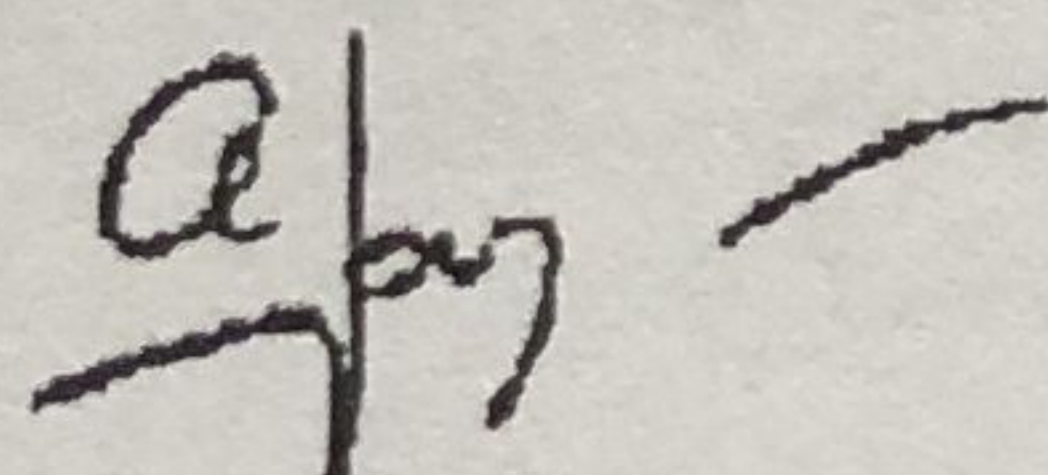
Matt C.W. Ho  
Complex Area Superintendent  
WIN-Castle-Kahulu



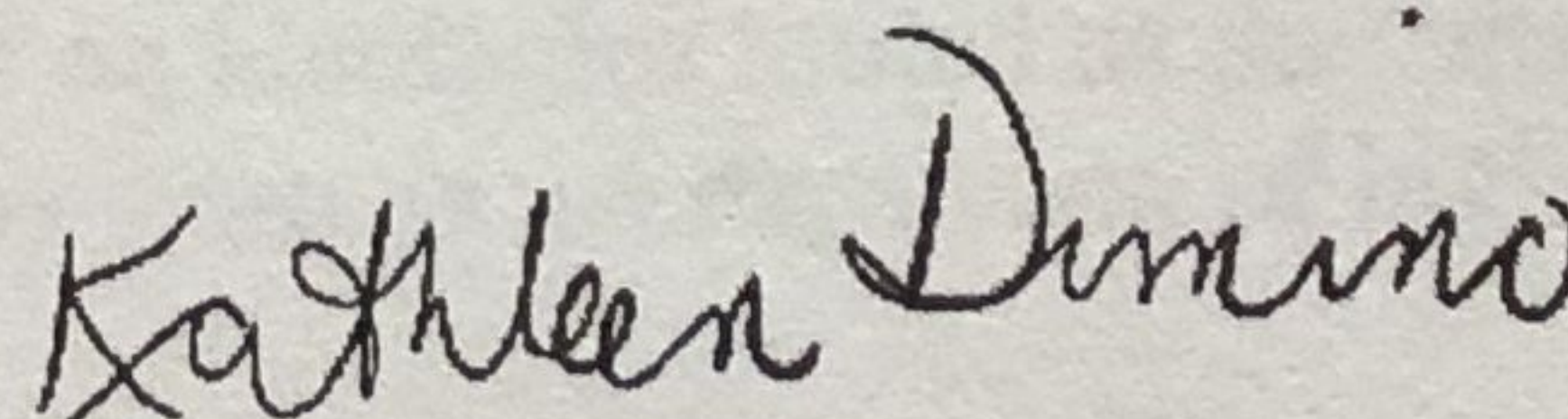
Lanelle Hibbs  
Complex Area Superintendent  
WIN-Kailua-Kalaheo



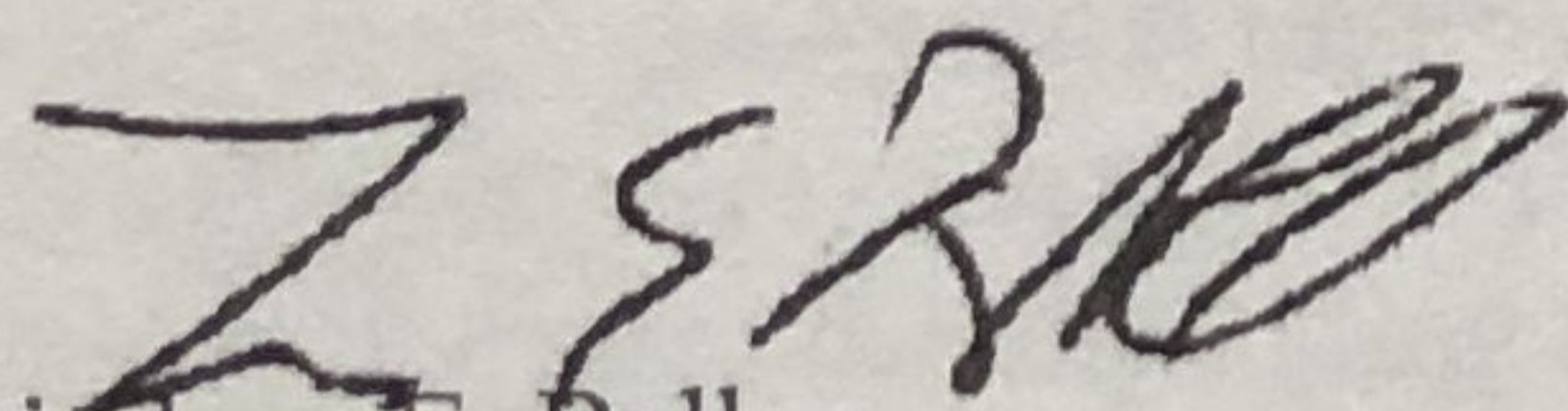
Chad K. Farias  
Complex Area Superintendent  
HAW-Hilo-Waiakea / Kau-Keaau-Pahoa



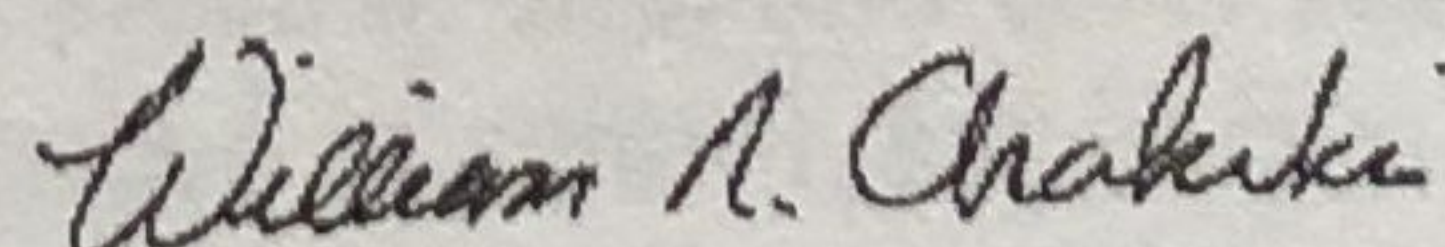
Arthur F. Souza  
Complex Area Superintendent  
HAW-Honokaa-Kealakehe-Kohala-Konawaena



Kathleen Dimino  
Complex Area Superintendent  
MAUI-Baldwin-Kekaulike-Maui



Lindsay E. Ball  
Complex Area Superintendent  
MAU-Hana-Lahainaluna-Lanai-Molokai



William N. Arakaki  
Complex Area Superintendent  
Kauai- Kapaa-Kauai-Waimea